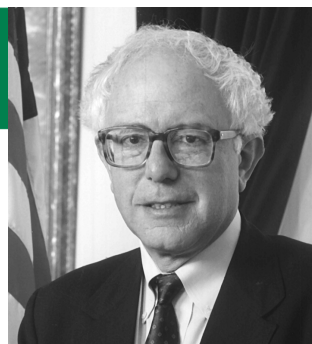




U.S. Representative

Bernie Sanders

A Special Focus on Environmental Issues



Fall 2003

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Fellow Vermonter,

Knowing your interest in environmental issues, I wanted to take this opportunity to keep you informed about some of the important developments taking place in Washington. As one of the members of Congress recently recognized for a 100% pro-environment voting record by USPIRG, I am continuing to work hard to address some of the environmental crises we face. Like you, I want to make certain that we do everything possible to protect our natural resources for future generations.

Needless to say, I am increasingly troubled by the President's anti-environmental policies. From attempts to water down Clean Air Act protections to proposing wholesale clearcutting of our national forest as "fire prevention," the Administration's record puts it squarely on the side of those who put short-term profit in front of environmental protections.

Now more than ever we need visionary leadership to create an environmentally sustainable future for our country and the world. As a nation we have the knowledge, the technology and the resources to do that. Unfortunately, the will is sorely lacking. Instead of moving this country in the direction of sustainable and non-polluting energy and clean air and water, the White House is promoting nuclear energy, protecting polluting coal-burning plants and reducing the number of wetlands and waterways protected by the Clean Water Act. Instead of striving to protect the family farm and working towards organic food production, this administration allies itself with huge agribusiness corporations and with genetically-modified food production. In order to protect themselves from citizen outrage, they are cutting off the public participation required by one of the cornerstones of American environmental law – the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Currently, I am supporting several important environmental proposals that have been introduced in the Congress. I am cosponsoring legislation that would increase and expand tax credits for investments in renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, biomass, co-generation and fuel cells. I am supporting a bill that would preserve the Arctic coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness. I am also supporting efforts to increase fuel economy standards for the U.S. auto industry, expand funding for public transportation and substantially improve our weatherization efforts.

I hope you find this newsletter useful. As always, I welcome your views and questions on these and other issues. If we can be of any assistance, please contact **my Burlington office toll-free at 1- 800-399-9834 or my Washington office at 202-225-4115**. You can also contact me through my website at **bernie.house.gov**, which is frequently updated with the latest information on what is going on in the Congress.

Sincerely yours,

Bernard Sanders
U.S. Congressman

Congressional Town Meeting on the Environment at UVM

Please join Congressman Sanders at his Congressional Town Meeting on the Environment on Monday, September 15, 2003, at 7:00 p.m. at University of Vermont's Ira Allen Chapel. The meeting, which is being held in conjunction with the University of Vermont School of Natural Resources, the National Wildlife Federation, the Vermont

Sierra Club, the Vermont Natural Resources Council and Forest Watch, will focus on the current state of the environment and the anti-environmental policies of the Administration. Participating at Bernie's Town Meeting will be John Passacantando, the national Executive Director of Greenpeace. John is also the founder of Ozone Action, an organization dedicated to stopping global

warming. Please join Bernie for an informative evening about the environmental issues facing our nation – and the planet.



The Truth about the Administration's Environmental Record

The Bush Administration's environmental record may be the most reactionary in the last hundred years of American history. Its anti-environmental agenda is being carried out on two fronts. First, the Administration is aggressively moving to stop any pro-environmental reforms. For instance, their policies encourage increased use of fossil fuels and nuclear power, oppose meaningful increases in CAFÉ standards, ignore international environmental treaties and underfund the ability of the Environmental Protection Agency to do its job.

Secondly, in service to their corporate benefactors, they are trying – and in some cases succeeding – in rolling back sensible environmental provisions that have been put in place to protect our land, air and water.

Many of these new policies and rollbacks have been documented by respected environmental groups, such as the League of Conservation Voters:

New Anti-Environmental Policies

- Despite his pledge to regulate carbon dioxide emissions from power plants, the President announced his administration's opposition to the Kyoto Protocol, the 1997 international accord setting limits on greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Administration proposes increased logging on public lands in the name of wildfire prevention. This proposal makes it easier for the timber industry to cut larger trees and restricts public input and environmental review, amounting to a significant erosion of the National Environmental Policy Act.
- EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers propose a rule to shift the regulation of many wetlands and other waters under the Clean Water Act to the states, many of which do not have the resources or authority to enforce clean water rules. The resulting rollback could affect up to 20 million acres of wetlands.
- What the Administration touts as the "greatest increase in fuel economy standards in the last 20 years," in fact increases standards by a mere 1.5 miles per gallon over the next three years. Along with the modest increase is a large loophole that brings the overall net increase to a disappointing 0.3 miles per gallon, which amounts to a mere one tenth of one percent per year for three years.
- According to the *New York Times*, in June, 2003, the White House rewrote a report commissioned by outgoing EPA Administrator Christie Whitman to provide the first comprehensive review of what is and is not known about the status of various environmental problems. Despite protest by EPA officials, the White House

eliminated references to many studies concluding that global warming is at least partly caused by rising concentrations of smokestack and tail-pipe emissions, deleted National Research Council conclusions about the likely human contribution to warming, and replaced a reference to a 1999 study showing that global temperatures had risen sharply in the previous decade compared with the last 1,000 years with a reference to a new study, partly financed by the American Petroleum Institute, questioning that conclusion.



Rollbacks

November, 2002:

- EPA announces plans to relax clean air standards. The weakening of the New Source Review section of the Clean Air Act essentially allows power plants to avoid installing pollution controls.
- The Administration proposes making it easier for industry to access public lands without assessing the environmental impact of such activities by limiting or eliminating administrative appeals and public comment. The proposal closely follows the timber industry's wish list.

December, 2002:

- EPA withdraws a Clinton era rule that provided federal oversight on the clean-up of nearly 300,000 miles of rivers and 5 million acres of lakes.
- The Administration "clarifies" its policy on preventing wetlands loss. The reinterpretation essentially weakens protections for these ecologically sensitive and important bodies of water by redefining "waters of the United States" very narrowly under the law, relaxing nationwide permit rules, and eliminating a requirement that destroyed wetlands be replaced acre-for-acre.

January, 2003:

- The Forest Service issues a proposal to exclude certain timber sales from environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act.

February, 2003:

- The Administration releases its budget proposal for fiscal year 2004. In it are cuts to the EPA of \$500 million from 2002 levels; cuts to natural resources funding, including a reduction in land acquisition funding of more than 50%; and cuts in renewable energy programs, including overall reductions in energy conservation programs by up to 36%.
- The President's Clear Skies Initiative is introduced in Congress. Its enactment would postpone or eliminate cuts in power plants' sulfur, nitrogen and mercury pollution compared to timely enforcement of current law. It would roll back provisions protecting local air quality, curbing pollution from upwind states, and restoring visibility in our national parks. Most importantly, it would do nothing to curb power plants' growing emissions of carbon dioxide, the number one cause of global warming.

March, 2003:

- The EPA gives the oil and gas industry a reprieve from regulations governing water pollution from construction at drilling sites. A rule requiring that companies obtain National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits was set to go into effect on March 10, 2003, but was delayed for two additional years after the oil and gas industry raised concerns about the rule. Nearly 30,000 sites nationwide could be affected by the delay in implementation.

April, 2003:

- The Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management makes getting a permit to drill for oil and gas on public lands easier. The overhaul will make environmental reviews and public input more difficult.
- The Bureau of Land Management takes steps to ease environmental protections for wildlife habitat in Alaska. The Bush Administration and its oil industry allies are looking into opening the Western Arctic Reserve for oil and gas drilling.

Needless to say, the list goes on. In short, while the President touts his record on the environment, the reality is that his policies will leave our environment less healthy, not more. We owe it to our children to put the health of the environment above the interests of corporate polluters.



Energy Alternatives: The Future is Now

The United States is home to less than 5% of the world's population, but we are responsible for 25% of global greenhouse emissions. Despite this, we have no national plan for reducing our consumption of energy, becoming more efficient in our energy use, or transitioning to cleaner, renewable sources. As a nation, and as a planet, we can no longer afford such a short-sighted approach to energy.

To remedy this problem, I have put forth a comprehensive energy bill that emphasizes energy conservation, efficiency, and the development of alternative energy sources. This plan, the Comprehensive Energy Efficiency Act for the 21st Century, would increase funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Weatherization Assistance Program. This legislation would also provide tax credits to consumers and businesses who purchase energy efficient appliances and homes; raise the fuel economy standards for most vehicles; and require that 20% of the nation's electricity come from renewable energy sources by the year 2020. If passed, this legislation would also impose a windfall profits tax on the oil, gas and electric industry to deter them from gouging consumers.

I am also cosponsoring the Morris K. Udall Arctic Wilderness Act of 2003 – legislation that would protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska from oil exploration and drilling – and the Clean Smokestacks Act of 2003, which would amend the Clean Air Act to reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, carbon dioxide, and mercury from electric power plants. These bills are good examples of rational policy for a clean environment and a renewable energy future.

The message of these and other pro-environment, pro-consumer bills is simple: We have the technology today to reduce our energy consumption dramatically and produce the energy we need from significantly cleaner sources. This is not pie-in-the-sky speculation. It is sensible policy that, with strong leadership, can be implemented now.

The Emergence of Wind Power

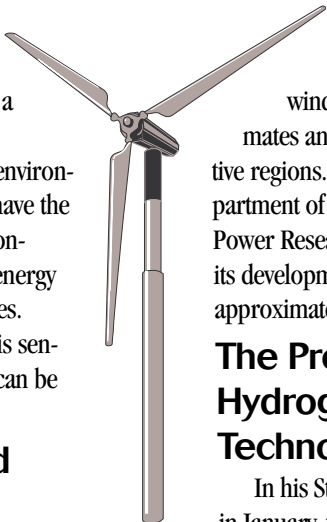
The wind energy industry has grown by an annual average of 24.5% for the last five years. Wind energy technology holds great promise for Vermont, providing increasingly cost-competitive electricity for consumers, creating significant rural economic development, and emitting no harmful pollutants. It is domestically available, abundant and inexhaustible. Estimates are that North Dakota alone has enough wind resources to provide all the electricity consumed in the United States. Very importantly, in Texas, wind is now the cheapest form of electricity, costing about 3 cents per kilowatt hour – well below the so-called traditional sources.

Through continued federal government support, wind energy has the potential to provide at least six percent of the nation's electricity by 2020. That is why I continue to support legislation that will foster this burgeoning industry, such as H.R. 570, which would amend the Internal Revenue Code to provide a 5-year extension of the tax credit for electricity produced from wind.



Rep. Sanders receives a briefing by a General Motors engineer about the GM HydroGen 3 Fuel Cell Vehicle. The HydroGen 3 emits no pollution; in fact, its only by-product is water.

To illustrate its significant potential, wind energy could be used to replace all of the 250 megawatts of power that the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant provides our state. And some estimate that wind energy can eventually provide between 20% and 50% of Vermont's electricity total needs. Vermont is already making substantial progress in the use of wind energy. The Searsburg wind power site produces 6 megawatts of electricity from 11 turbines, enough to power 2,000 homes (reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 22 million pounds per year), and the site has the potential to expand to 30 megawatts. The plant also serves as an education resource for wind generation in cold climates and environmentally sensitive regions. This is why the U.S. Department of Energy and the Electric Power Research Institute assisted with its development and have funded approximately one-third of its cost.



The Promise of Hydrogen Fuel Cell Technology

In his State of the Union address in January, the President proposed spending \$1.2 billion to develop hydrogen fuel cell technologies. Cars powered by hydrogen fuel cell technology emit only water vapor from the tailpipe and their potential air-quality benefits for our nation's congested cities cannot be overstated. However, the hydrogen we use to fuel these revolutionary automobiles can be derived from any number of resources, some of which are clean and some of which are not.

Hydrogen can easily be extracted from water using existing technology. Solar and wind power are already used to cleanly extract hydrogen from water, which can then be stored in fuel cells to power automobiles. This technology has

the real potential to replace completely the polluting cycle of oil extraction, refinement and combustion with a clean, renewable cycle of transportation energy.

Unfortunately, President Bush's proposal allocates the funding he proposes for hydrogen research and development in exactly the wrong way. First of all, over fifty percent of the funds are set aside for automakers and the energy industry. The President's plan is designed to ensure that the hydrogen used in this new vehicle is produced from the same old polluting sources, such as coal, oil and natural gas, thereby shifting the emission point from the tailpipe to the smokestack when the hydrogen is extracted from them. That's a transportation revolution that keeps the fossil fuels industry happy, but which does very little to seriously address the emission of carbon dioxide and other pollutants into the earth's atmosphere.

In terms of revolutionizing transportation we are at a critical crossroads. I recently had the opportunity to drive a prototype fuel cell car and I can assure you that it drove just like the car you and I are used to. The car of the future is here now. The question is whether we will choose a road that makes no sense for the consumer or the environment – extracting hydrogen from polluting fossil fuels – or whether we will choose a clean, abundant and renewable source of hydrogen – water, and use non-polluting energy to extract it. I will be fighting hard in Washington to make sure we choose the road of clean and renewable energy.

President Makes Anti-Environmental Pick for New EPA Head

On August 11th, the President picked Utah Governor Mike Leavitt to head up the EPA. If confirmed by the Senate, Leavitt will assume the post formerly held by Christine Todd Whitman, a moderate Republican who had some very public spat with other members of the Administration. But Leavitt's own anti-environmental record looks to make him more in line with Administration policy. As documented by the Sierra Club, Utah under Leavitt was in last place nationwide in terms of Clean Water Act enforcement. As Governor, Leavitt advocated building more coal-powered electricity plants, supported a controversial highway through sensitive wetlands, fired state biologists with whom he disagreed, and even fired the head of Utah's Division of Wildlife Resources after the division fined the Leavitt family for illegally moving diseased fish from its commercial fishery. That's not the record of someone we should appoint as the nation's chief protector of the environment.

Rep. Bernie Sanders

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*If you receive more than one copy of this newsletter, we apologize. Please feel
free to pass the extra copy along to an interested friend.
This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense.*

Bernie's Congressional Town
Meeting on the Environment

Monday, Sept. 15, 2003 • 7 pm
at UVM's Ira Allen Chapel

Held in conjunction with

UVM School of Natural Resources • National Wildlife Federation
Vermont Sierra Club • Vermont Natural Resources Council • Forest Watch

Keynote Speaker

John Passacantando, Executive Director of Greenpeace

Saving the Family Farm and the Environment
New USDA Organic Standards

The organic foods industry is booming. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), growth in retail sales of organic foods has been 20% or more annually since 1990, and organic milk is a major part of that growth. This is good news for the environment and good news for Vermont farmers. By "going organic," farmers help protect our air, soil, water and food supply from toxic chemicals and other pollutants and, in return, receive a higher price for their products.

On October, 2002, the USDA's new national standards for food labeled "organic" went into effect. The

new National Organic Standards provide a national definition for the term "organic" and specify the methods, practices and substances that can be used in producing and handling organic crops, establish clear organic labeling criteria, and prohibit the use of genetic engineering methods, ionizing radiation, and sewage sludge for fertilization. They help clarify what "organic" means and replace a patchwork of different state and private certification standards.

In my view, the continued growth of the organic foods market and the assurance provided to consumers by the new USDA standards lay the groundwork for an historic move by our agricultural system toward sustainable organic production that does not rely on chemicals or the genetically modified organisms (GMOs) so often found in today's food supply. Such a move will benefit Vermont family farmers and Vermont families by increasing the supply of healthy organic foods on the market and decreasing the amount of pollutants we discharge into our fragile ecosystem.

